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Burton, Clarence Monroe,  
1853-1932.

Early Detroit



# Early Detroit

A Sketch of Some of the  
Interesting Affairs  
*of the* Olden Time



By C. M. BURTON

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## *A Word to the Reader*

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**T**HIS is not a history of the City of Detroit, for a history of the place would fill many volumes.

Detroit is one of the oldest cities in the northern part of the United States, and its history is full of romance. The novelist, the hero worshiper and the student can all find enough to employ their time for years in studying the place, its peoples, the objects for its establishment, its struggles for existence and its success.

Here have been noted only a very few of the many events that go to make up its story.

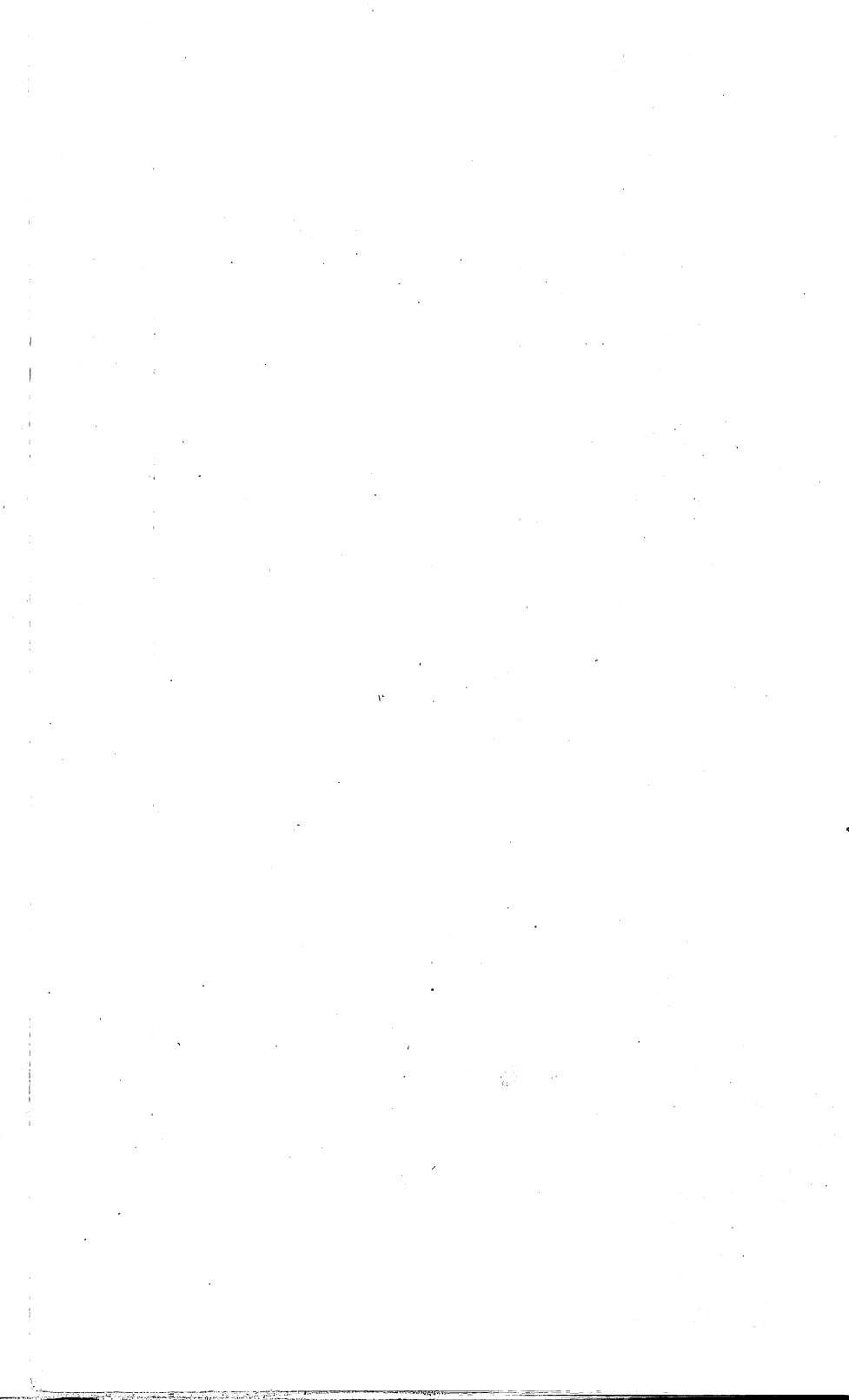






Clarence Mousse Burton

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## Detroit Under French Rule.

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**A**NTOINE DE LA MOTHE CADILLAC was born in the department of Tarne and Garonne, in Gascony, France, about 1656. His father was Jean de Laumet and his mother Jeanne de Malenfant. The name Cadillac was assumed from landed possessions owned by him. He came to America in 1683, and settled at Port Royal (now called Annapolis), near the home of the heroine of Longfellow's "Evangeline." He became a man of considerable importance to the French government in consequence of his knowledge of the New England Sea Coast and in recommending him for promotion, his superior officer called him La Mothe. This name, which was quite common in France, clung to him and soon he adopted it and thereafter passed by it. He had drifted to Quebec within the next few years, and there he married Marie Therese Guyon, June 25, 1687. In 1688 he received, as a grant from the French government, Mount Desert Island and a great tract of the main land opposite the island, including the whole of Bar Harbor, Maine.

He was at Mackinac as commandant from 1694 to 1698, and then, passing through Quebec, he went to Paris in order to lay before the king his project for establishing a colony at Detroit. Successful in his errand, he returned to America, and started from Montreal for his new home on the Detroit River, on June 2d, 1701. He was accompanied by one hundred Frenchmen and one hundred Algonquin Indians. His route was along the Ottawa River, which enters the St.

Lawrence at Montreal, and from the Ottawa to Lake Nipissing, across that lake to French River, and down this river and Pickerel River to the Georgian Bay, down the easterly coast of this bay to the River St. Clair, and thence to the present site of Detroit. The Ottawa route was chosen because the Iroquois Indians, who lived in the northern and western part of New York, were at war with the French, and would not permit any persons to pass along the Niagara route.

In the summer of 1904, I went to the eastern end of Lake Nipissing, and spent several weeks in going over the pathway of Cadillac in this, his first trip to Detroit. Passing through the eastern end of this lake, we reached the outlet known as French River. With an Indian guide and birch bark canoes, we paddled the entire length of French and Pickerel Rivers to French River Village, the head of navigation. The country today is as wild and barren as it was in Cadillac's time, and if he could again visit this scene, there is no doubt that the old landmarks that guided him then would again serve to show him his way through this vast waste of water and of rocks. The country is a great desert of rocks—rocks for miles and miles—no trees of any size, and underbrush only in the crevices of the rocks where the accumulation of the dust of ages has been sufficient to sustain a little vegetable life. The river is not a river, but a continuation of the lake. It has very little current, though it occasionally contracts into a narrower channel with a waterfall, around which our boats had to be carried. The scenery is perfectly wild, and the route we took is doubtless the one used by all travelers for the past two hundred and fifty years.

Passing over this route and along the coast and river, Cadillac reached the site of Detroit, and located it as his future home, on the 24th day of July, 1701. That was a busy day in Detroit. No hand was idle. Drawing their canoes upon the grassy shore of the strait, they all set to

work to found a city, little thinking that it would one day contain more white people than the whole of North America contained at that time. Some cleared the land for the village site, while others, passing into the woods, cut pickets or young trees six to eight inches in diameter and twelve to fifteen feet in length, to form palisades for the new fort. Still others, under the direction of their priest, Father Constantine De L'Halle, set about building a church—the church of Ste. Anne, the first building in Detroit. We have no account of just how much work was done each day, but we know that the church was so far progressed that it was named on the 26th day of July, two days after landing, and called Ste. Anne, as that was Ste. Anne's day.

The work of building a palisaded fort an arpent (192.75 feet) square, that being the size of the village, was very laborious, for every stick of timber had to be carried by hand from the place where it grew to the place where it was used. The ground around the fort for some distance was entirely cleared of trees and underbrush. This was done so that hostile Indians could not gather near the fort under cover. The French tried to live on good terms with the Indians, and generally succeeded. They extended a general invitation to all the tribes of the west to settle in the neighborhood of the new village, and in the first winter, 1701-2, there were 6000 Indians here.

Cadillac remained the commandant of Detroit for ten years, and until the year 1711. He did not always get along well with his own people. He was opinionated and quarrelsome. Those who lived in the village were compelled to do as he directed, but some of them had influential friends in Montreal and Quebec, who took up their quarrels, and finally succeeded in having Cadillac removed.

His most inveterate enemies were the Jesuits and the Company of the Colony of Canada. The quarrel with the Jesuits was of long continuance, and was a part of the troubles

that started between that order and Governor Frontenac. Cadillac would not permit the Jesuits to establish themselves at Detroit, and the church here was under the supervision of the Recollet order.

The Company of the Colony was not pleased that Cadillac had the exclusive right of trading at this post, and they set about it to ruin Cadillac and destroy his village. All parties appealed to the law courts and to the king, but Cadillac was temporarily victorious. In the end they succeeded in driving him from Detroit, and his successor took all of his property, estimated at 50,000 livres, and refused to account for it. Cadillac became governor of Louisiana, and left Detroit for his new position in 1711. After serving as governor for a few years, he returned to France, and during the height of the John Law furor in Paris he told the people that the John Law scheme was a swindle. For his plain talk Cadillac was arrested and thrown into the Bastille. After some months of imprisonment he was liberated, but was never tried. Later in life he was appointed governor of Castell-Sarrazin, in the southern part of France, and died there October 18, 1730. He never recovered his losses at Detroit, but the State of Massachusetts gave to his granddaughter, Madam Gregoire, his old land grant at Bar Harbor, after the close of the War of the Revolution.

During the command of Cadillac he sent repeated reports of the village—its inhabitants—its troubles—improvements and, in fact, everything regarding the times, but no such enterprising commandant succeeded him, and many things are left in obscurity.

When it was known that he was to leave the place, many of the people who were personally attached to him, and who did not have families in the village, packed up their belongings and returned to Montreal and Quebec. So many people left the settlement that the town was partly deserted. The village lines had been extended in previous years to accommo-

date the growing population within the palisades, but now that the place was decreasing in numbers, the new commandant, Dubuisson, concluded to decrease the size of the village enclosure. For this purpose he divided the town in nearly equal parts, and built a new palisade in such a form as to exclude half of the old village from the protection of the garrison. The town had originally included the land measured along the line of the present Jefferson avenue, from the line of Griswold street to Wayne street. There could be no further extension in a westerly direction, for from here the road, if projected, would intersect the high embankment and the river beyond. All extensions then must have been in an easterly direction, towards Woodward avenue. Ste. Anne's church always occupied the site just west of the crossing of Griswold street and Jefferson avenue.

The division of the village was in such a form that the church and the dwellings in its immediate neighborhood were excluded from the palisades—that is, the new picket line was run north and south at such a distance west of the present Griswold street, that the portion of the village east of this picket line was left exposed and unprotected.

A meeting of the citizens was called and a protest made against this act of the commandant. A remonstrance made by many of the foremost men of the village was drawn up, signed and sent to Cadillac, and an earnest protest was made by the village priest, which was also forwarded to Cadillac. The old commandant could do nothing for his people. The attention of the people was soon diverted to more important events. The decrease in population of the village incited the Fox Indians to attack it for the purpose of destroying the settlement and driving off the French. In 1712 the Fox nation drew near the post and established a fort of their own on the summit of the hill where now stands the Moffat building, and opened an attack on the French. The details of the siege are long and bloody. The first act of the French com-

mandant was to destroy the church and other buildings outside the palisade so as to prevent their being used to protect the Fox Indians. Dubuisson succeeded in forming an alliance with all the other Indian tribes, and, with his few soldiers surrounded the Fox Indians and soon had them at his mercy. He demanded an unconditional surrender. The battle had already raged for nineteen days, when, during a heavy storm at night, the Fox tribe succeeded in escaping. They were overtaken the next day at the place now called Fox Creek, a few miles above the village, now the eastern limits of the city. Here a battle took place between the various Indian tribes, all opposed to the Fox Indians, and the latter were all killed or taken prisoners. The women and children were incorporated into other tribes, but the men were reserved for the horrible deaths that only Indians were capable of inflicting on their enemies.

Dubuisson was not, properly speaking, the commandant at Detroit. La Forest had been chosen to succeed Cadillac, but he was old and unwell and did not come to Detroit until 1712, and Dubuisson governed in his place until that time. During his term of office La Forest urged the French government to build up Detroit, which was fast falling to decay, but was unsuccessful. He died in 1714, and again Dubuisson filled the vacancy until Sabrevois, the next commandant, came later in the same year.

Sabrevois retained the office of commandant for three years. During this time the French court canceled or annulled all the land grants made by Cadillac, alleging that he was not authorized to make them in the first place. This action made the people still further dissatisfied with the post and more of them returned to their old eastern homes. Finding that their land titles were not good, they abandoned their farms, and those who did not leave the settlement, retired to the village, living by trading with the Indians and hunting for themselves.



In 1717 Alphonse de Tonty arrived in Detroit to fill his first term as commandant. He had been in Detroit as second in command, since its foundation. His wife, and Madam Cadillac, were the first white women in the west, having together reached the place in 1702. He was in straightened circumstances and gave a bill of sale of his prospective income from the trade of Detroit to Francois La Marque and Louis Gastineau. These men associated with them three others, and the five men tried to prevent the other citizens from trading at or near Detroit. The place was deteriorating anyway, but such action drove it down hill still faster. Under former customs an annual fair was held in Detroit, lasting for several days. All the streets were filled with shops of goods, open for sale to the Indians, and they came in great numbers and bought, sometimes of one trader and sometimes of another, as they were best suited and found the best bargains. Now all this was changed. The new proprietors of the trade only permitted one store to be opened for all trading. There was no competition. The Indians were not invited by the display, to make any more of the annual fair than of any other day and they soon ceased to come at stated times to do their trading. They had thought a good deal of Tonty and it was partly at their request that he had received his appointment. Now they were disappointed with him and asked for his recall.

Complaints were lodged against him, both by the citizens and Indians. To answer these charges Tonty went to Quebec and Picoté de Belestre was placed in command of Detroit during his absence. Tonty returned to Detroit without having accomplished much, but with a new enemy, for he had visited the home of Ramezay, the Major of Quebec, and was there publicly insulted by Ramezay's daughter, who accused him of bringing misfortune on her father. Such an affair as this was of great importance in the upper circles of French society of the time and portended no good to Tonty. In the

year 1724 he was again summoned to Quebec to answer charges made against him by La Marque, who had purchased some rights of Cadillac at Detroit and wanted to visit the place, but was prevented by Tonty.

While he was absent on this matter, the prominent citizens of Detroit, Pierre Chesne, Henry Campau, Louis Campau, Jacob de Marsac, Jacques de Gaudefroy and many others, drew up a paper protesting against the rule of Tonty and demanding his recall. They said he was old and had lost all of his spirit. The Huron Indians also threatened to leave their village near the post, and establish themselves at the Maumee river, unless they had another commandant. The threat of the Indians had a greater effect than the protest of the citizens, for if they moved to the Miami (Maumee) their trade would at once go to the English and that would not only ruin Detroit, but the whole country, so far as the French influences were concerned.

The French government did not properly sustain the post at this time. The Company of the Colony only wanted the country retained because of the fur trade, but that trade could not be fostered unless the English traders could be kept from invading the country. The French could not comprehend this fact then, though they saw it afterwards, when it was too late. At this time they did not maintain a sufficient garrison at Detroit to protect it and they did not foster its trade or induce the French civilians to go there to settle.

The place was falling into a gradual decay because of this neglect. The Historian Charlevoix visited it in 1721 and then noted that it was being deserted and abandoned. He writes as follows regarding it: "It is a long time since the importance of the place, still more the beauty of the country about the straits, has given ground to wish that some considerable settlements were made in this place; this has been tolerably well begun some fifteen years since, but certain causes, of which I am not informed, have reduced it almost

to nothing; those who are against it allege, first, that it would bring the trade for the northern furs too near the English, who, as they are able to afford their commodities to the Indians cheaper than we, would draw all that trade into the province of New York. Secondly, that the lands near the straits are not fertile, and that the whole surface to the depth of nine or ten inches consists of sand, below which is hard clay, impenetrable to the water; from whence it happens that the plains and interior parts of the woods are always drowned; that everywhere you see nothing but diminutive, ill-grown oaks and hard walnut trees, and that the trees having roots always under water, their fruits ripen very late. These reasons have not been unanswered; it is true that in the neighborhood of Fort Pontchartrain the lands have a mixture of sand, and that in the neighboring forests there are bottoms almost constantly under water, however, these very lands have produced wheat eighteen years successively without the least manure, and you have no great way to go to find the finest soil in the world. With respect to woods, without going a great way from the fort, I have seen, as I have been walking, such as may vie with our noblest forests."

This tribute of Charlevoix could not attract new settlers when the government itself was unwilling to encourage them to come. The land titles that had been granted by Cadillac had all been canceled and no new grants were made.

Tonty again visited Quebec in 1727, to welcome the entrance of the new governor, Beauharnois, but he did not make a favorable impression on the governor, and when the complaints of the Indians were received, Tonty was removed from his command. Beauharnois told the Indians that Tonty's term would expire in the spring of 1728.

Tonty, broken hearted at the result, returned to Detroit, there to end his days while he still held the office of commandant. He died Nov. 10, 1727.

Belestre, who had temporarily been in command in 1721-22, also died in Detroit, October 9, 1729.

The next was Jean Baptiste de St. Ours, sieur Deschaillons, who was appointed in 1728, but he only remained a short time as he feared to lose his chances of promotion in the army, if he settled down in the post as commandant.

In the spring of 1730, Louis Henry Deschamps, sieur de Boishebert became commandant and retained the office for three years, the usual term. He died in Montreal June 6, 1736. There was a slight improvement in Detroit affairs during his term of office. It was merely a start, but it continued to advance during the term of his successor, Ives Jacques Pean, sieur de Livaudiere, which extended from 1733 to 1736.

In the year 1735, Pean reported that there were between 1300 and 1400 minots (bushels) of wheat raised at Detroit, and that the price had fallen to three livres (about sixty cents) per minot. Some of this wheat could be exported. The usual exports from the country were only furs and maple sugar. In 1734 the village had become of sufficient importance to be recognized by the appointment of a sub-delegate, and royal notary. Robert Navarre was appointed to that office. He was in Detroit before his appointment and there married Marie Barrois Lothman, February 10, 1734. His office was of more than usual importance, for the public records, which were begun at this time, were kept by the notary and it was to him that every couple, before their marriage, went to have drawn and placed of record, the marriage contract that always preceded the church wedding. Navarre was much beloved by the people, among whom he acted as justice, notary, surveyor, collector and sub-delegate until the end of the French rule in 1760. After the British took possession, in that year, they retained Navarre in his office for many years and he continued in the confidence of the French community until his death, November 21, 1791.

A change in the feelings of the Quebec government to-

wards Detroit began to show itself in 1737, when the Intendant, Hocquart, wrote regarding it, that no permanent post could be established there until settlers could be induced to move there and settle upon and cultivate lands to which they could obtain good titles. There should be, at least, sixty men in the garrison with proper officers. Now there were only seventeen. At this time Nicolas Joseph Desnoyelles was the acting commandant. The appointment of the commandant was a prerogative of the Paris government and not of the Quebec government. Desnoyelles was chosen by Governor Beauharnois in 1736 and was directed to proceed at once to his post at Detroit. When this choice was reported to the King he rejected it. In the meantime Desnoyelles, in ignorance of the King's veto, proceeded to his post and served out the entire three years, from 1736 to 1739, before he was informed of his rejection. He was a comrade of Verandry, the explorer, on some of his trips and went west on an exploring expedition in 1744.

When it became known in 1738 that the King would not appoint Desnoyelles, the office was given to Pierre Jacques Payan de Noyan, sieur de Charvis, but he did not go to Detroit until 1739. De Noyan was a member of the Le Moyne (or Le Moine) family which gave so many important men to early Canada. Ten famous sons of Charles Le Moyne have left their names indelibly impressed upon the pages of the history of Canada and Louisiana. There was one daughter, Catherine Jeanne, who married Pierre Payan, sieur de Noyan, and the commandant at Detroit was the son of this daughter. He held that office from 1739 to 1742 and brought his family to Detroit. His son, Pierre Louis, was born there December 10, 1741. The father subsequently became major and governor of Montreal.

The village of Detroit and the adjacent settlement were now increasing in population. The farm lands on both sides of the river and along nearly its entire length, were being

taken up by farmers and placed in a state of cultivation. Every farm had a narrow frontage on the river. Only a few acres were cultivated, but a log house was built and an orchard planted. There was a road along the front as close to the river as possible. During the wet seasons of the year this road was impassable and then the neighbors communicated by boats on the river; for every family had a canoe. The people had cattle, sheep and horses. The latter were originally brought from France. There is no evidence that the Indians, in this part of the country, had any ponies before the coming of the Europeans. Mention is made of the one horse, Colon, which Cadillac had in the village at the time of his command, as the only equine in the country.

The farms were all very narrow and each fronted on the river. There was a two fold reason for this way of dividing the country. Every farm had its own water right and the driest season never prevented a supply of water for necessary purposes. The farms were so narrow, and the houses on them so near to each other, that in case of danger, each house could signal to the next one without much delay or trouble.

The farms were from 40 to 80 arpents in depth. The French arpent, as a measure of distance, was 192.75 English feet, so that the depth of the farms was from one and one-half miles to three miles.

The lands in the country in the rear of these river farms was never granted, either by the French or British governments. The first grant of any considerable size was that made by the United States to Michigan Territory in 1806 of the Ten Thousand Acre Tract, now partly in the City of Detroit.

One of the most famous of Detroit's commandants was Pierre Joseph Celoron, sieur de Blainville, chevalier of the military order of St. Louis. He served as commandant from 1742 to 1744 and from 1750 to 1753. During the interval from 1744 to 1750 he was engaged in important affairs for his government. One of the most important of his works

during this time, and the one for which he is most generally known, was the planting of lead plates along the Ohio river in the year 1749 as an indication of the claims of France to that country. This work preceded the French-Indian war and the claims set up by France at that time were followed by aggressive action that resulted in the English not only driving the French from Ohio, but in taking Canada from them and converting it into an English possession.

Paul Joseph Le Moine, chevalier de Longueil was commandant from 1744 to 1748.

During Celoron's second term, the governor of Canada offered, as an inducement to people to settle at Detroit, to assist them with articles necessary to sustain them for two or three years. Each head of a family was given a farm, of the usual size, rations for the members from the military stores, tools and implements of husbandry. Many families came up and settled here under these inducements, and yet the plan was not very popular. The materials furnished these farmers in the way of tools and stock, were not gifts but loans, and were expected to be repaid when the people became permanently settled. A full list of these emigrants has been preserved, containing the names of fifty-four heads of families.

Many of the newcomers were young men without wives, and young women were so scarce that Celoron wrote to ask for girls to become wives to the young farmers.

Many of Celoron's children were born in Detroit. One of his daughters, Marie Madeleine, became a member of the order of Grey Nuns of Montreal, and in 1777 his widow became a member of the same order under the name of Sister Marie Catherine Eury Laperelle. She died in Montreal, November 4, 1797. One of the islands in Detroit river is named in honor of this commandant, Celoron.

Jacques Pierre Daneau, sieur de Muy, was commandant until his death, May 18, 1758, when the command fell upon the second officer, Jean Baptiste Henry Beranger. This com-

mand was only temporary and the last French officer to hold that position, Francois Marie Picoté, sieur de Belestre, came in 1758 and remained until he was carried away a prisoner of the English in 1760.

The village and country had grown in population to such an extent that it furnished one hundred militia to assist in the war with England. This body marched to Niagara, only to learn, as they approached that place, that they were too late and that the fort there had already capitulated. They immediately turned and marched back to Detroit.

Belestre was a son of the man by the same name, who was in Detroit during the time of Tonty and who died there in 1729. His mother had been the widow of Jean Cuillerier, and he was therefore closely related to the Cuillerier or Beau-bien family. He was a capable and energetic officer, taking part in many of the important military affairs of Canada, leading a detachment in the battle of Braddock's defeat and acting as commandant at St. Joseph and other places.

After the transfer of Canada to England he occupied important places under the new government and died in Quebec in 1793.

To this man, our own Judge Campbell, in his History of Michigan, pays a fine tribute.

A few words of a general nature might be said regarding the entire period of French occupancy. There were no Indians there when Cadillac came, for the country was in a neutral zone between the antagonistic Iroquois and Algonquin Indians. The land was entirely uncultivated when the French first came in 1701 and their tillage was so superficial that the soil was never exhausted by them. They could have raised great crops if they had desired, but this was of little use so long as the population was sparse and nearly every family had a farm. Wheat sometimes sold for twenty to twenty-five livres per minot (four to five dollars per bushel, a livre was about twenty cents), and again it sold, as we have seen, for



sixty cents. Peas, ten to twelve livres; Indian corn, fifteen to eighteen livres; tobacco, forty to fifty sols (cents) per pound; eggs, twenty to twenty-five sols per dozen; onions, five livres per hundred. A cow brought up to one hundred livres (\$20) and a calf thirty livres (\$6).

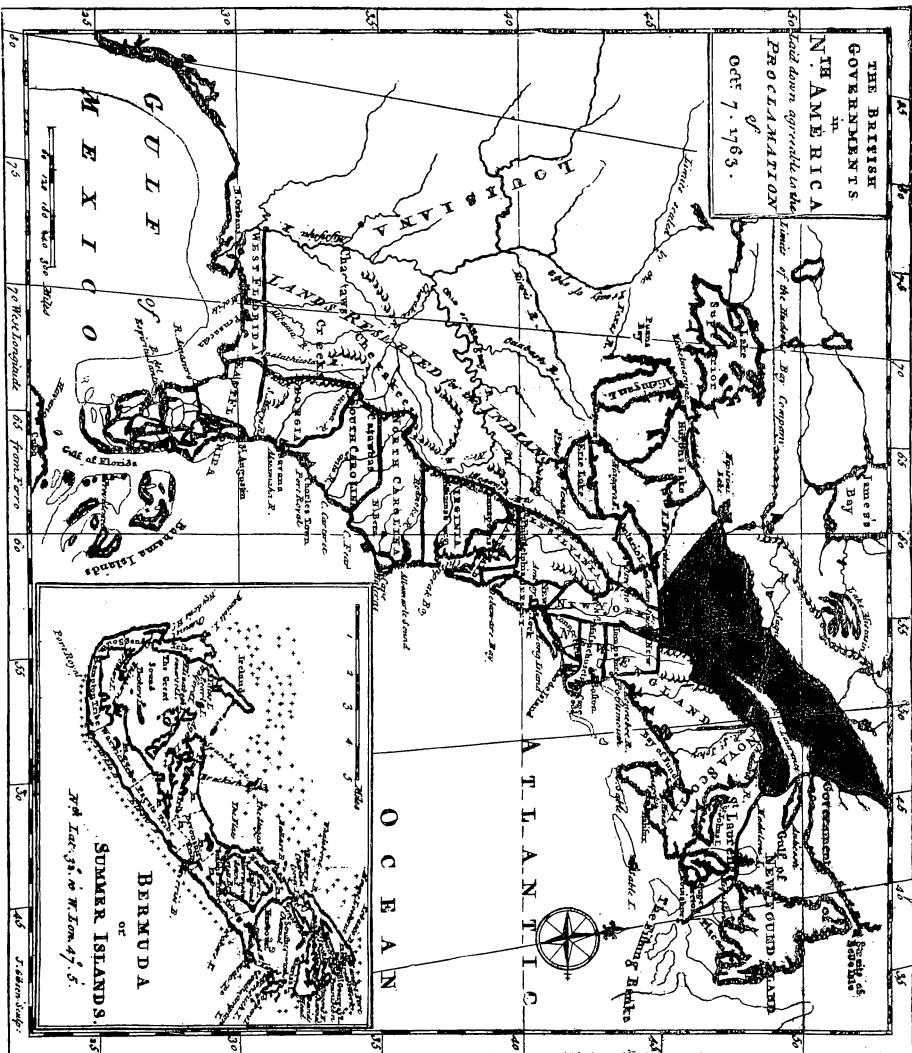
The people sold produce to the Indians, and to a few of the town people, but these were about all the customers they had. None of the people, either within or without the village, baked their own bread. This work was almost universally done by the public baker, as it is at the present time in many European cities. Occasionally the farmer supplied voyageurs who were passing along the river with goods to the upper posts. Powder, one of the most important articles brought up from below, sold at forty sols per pound, and knives for four livres, ten sols per dozen.

The trade of the post was, until about 1727, in the hands of the commandant, but this plan resulted in such greivous oppressions that it was thereafter made free. At this time the post had fallen very low and there were only 28 or 30 heads of families left. In that year it was officially proposed that if the owners of the trade licenses would accept 500 livres for their rights, and give up the post, that it would be abandoned and destroyed. "We shall have a post," the report states, "abandoned, 300 leagues from Montreal, with no provision made for the garrison, the maintenance of which will fall on the King again, contrary to his will."

Besides the notarial records kept by Navarre, which have recently been found, the records of the Church of Ste. Anne contain the most authentic information regarding the growth of the place. The following statistics are compiled from the church records. The Church of Ste. Anne was first built in 1701 and destroyed by fire in 1703. Possibly these records contain the announcement of the birth of a child to Madam Cadillac, but that was the only event that occurred in the two years. The records since 1704 are complete.

Years	Baptisms	Marriages	Deaths
1700 to 1710	94	3	13
1720	43	7	15
1730	106	16	44
1740	156	27	73
1750	236	24	114
1760	363	70	216
1770	351	80	217
1780	476	60	182
1790	551	80	219
1800	914	167	367
Total	<u>3,290</u>	<u>534</u>	<u>1,460</u>

After 1760 all Catholics, English as well as French, attended this church and there were many Protestants married and baptised there, it being the only church organization.





## Detroit Under British Rule.

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THIS country was French territory from the time of the early French explorers until the fall of Quebec in 1759. In 1760, Montreal also capitulated to the British forces, and late in that year, Major Robert Rogers—the intrepid New England ranger—came to Detroit with a company of soldiers, and accepted the surrender of the place from the last French commandant, Picoté de Belestre. The people of Detroit had not taken a very active part in the war then existing between France and England, but a few Americans were prisoners at the post when Rogers came. It might properly be stated, however, that Rogers was the first English speaking American to visit Detroit as an English possession.

It has been repeatedly stated that the French were a merry making people—so much inclined to frivolity and pleasure, that the cares of business made little impression on their minds—that the troubles of the day were laid aside as the night came on, and the evenings were filled with jocularly. They are represented as being simple and innocent—relying upon their priest to settle all their troubles, contented with whatever decision he might make. I believe this idea of Acadian simplicity is entirely wrong, and that there was no great difference between the French of 1760 and the French of to-day.

The little village, which occupied a space of about two acres of land, was surrounded by a high fence or palisade

made of young trees, cut about fifteen feet long, imbedded deeply in the ground, and extending above its surface some ten or twelve feet. The houses within the enclosure were huddled together—the streets were very narrow—ten or twelve feet, with the exception of the principal street—Ste. Anne street—which was about twenty feet wide. The people were strict church goers, but very worldly withal. The courts of Quebec testify to the constant quarrels and law suits that they indulged in, but as Quebec was a long distance away, and as it took a long time to settle a quarrel through the courts, a more primitive method of procedure was generally obtained. When a dispute arose between two parties and no settlement could be arrived at, they chose three arbitrators to determine the matter. The award of the arbitrators was enforced by the citizens, for the person who refused to abide by the determination of the arbitrators, was not permitted to engage in trade, nor was he trusted or associated with by the other citizens. Of necessity he soon came to the conclusion that he must conform to the award in order to live in the community. The military commandant also lent the assistance of his authority to enforce the award, and this he did very harshly sometimes. This method was employed by the English after 1760 and until the establishment of courts, near the end of the British rule. The French people generally got along well with the Indians, but they were afraid of them, and were usually prepared for treachery. At the time of the siege of Detroit by Pontiac in 1763, the French, or Canadians, remained on their farms outside of the village and few of them were molested by the Indians. They lost their cattle and such things as the Indians could steal or eat, but their lives were spared, while no Englishman dared to expose himself to the fury of the savages for the greater portion of the year that the siege lasted.

The farms in the neighborhood of the village were all owned and cultivated by the Canadians. Most of them also

owned houses within the village enclosure, or were so situated that they could remove to the village for protection whenever the savages became troublesome.

Some writers have claimed that the French farmers were slothful and negligent of their farms and of their crops. I think this is true, but certainly there was no inducement to live otherwise. Each farmer only cultivated a few acres of land, and raised but little more than was necessary to support himself and his family. The village was so small in proportion to the number of farmers, that there was little opportunity to sell the farm products, and there was no inducement to do good farming.

The exportation of furs was the only business that brought an income to the settlement from abroad. The farmers were also hunters and trappers, and most of them bought furs from the Indians and sold them to the traders in the post. The traders brought from Montreal, powder and lead, brandy and trinkets—beads—fancy dress goods, and little ornaments to please the Indians. These were placed on sale or exchanged for furs. The Province of Quebec was organized by proclamation of King George III. in 1763, but Detroit was not in the lines of that province and was thereafter and until 1774, in the Indian country.

Within a very few years after the British came they had monopolized the trade in furs, and the Canadians were driven either to live on their farms, or to join the Indians in the chase. They did both. Living upon their farms they cultivated a little patch of ground during the summer season, but they left everything to the care of the women and younger children, and took to the woods as soon as the hunting season began. Even during the summer, a large portion of the farm work was done by the women, while the men spent their time fishing, and in associating with the Indians with whom they were on terms of the closest intimacy.

While the village never took any active part either in the

French and Indian War, or in the War of the Revolution, it was never quite at rest, nor did its people ever remain long in peaceful security.

The French-Indian War was not ended before the Siege of Detroit by Pontiac began—and the people had scarcely recovered from the fright of that experience, when they were again threatened with an Indian uprising. A few years of progress and growth followed, and then came the rumors of war in the far East.

In April 1775, the battle of Lexington was fought and the war for the emancipation of America began.

At the outbreak of the war there were a few British soldiers stationed at Detroit. There was no fort here, but there was a citadel located near the intersection of Jefferson avenue and Wayne streets, on the western side of the village. This citadel consisted of a parade ground with barracks capable of holding two or three hundred soldiers.

The French citizens never took kindly to the English, and although there was no open threat of a revolt or opposition to the constituted authorities, it was thought best to station an extra number of British soldiers at the place.

There was also appointed to Detroit, as a civil commandant, a lieutenant governor, Henry Hamilton.

In the colonies there were numbers of families that did not want to take an active part in the war, and for the purpose of avoiding complications, they moved westward into the Ohio Valley. These newcomers aroused the Indians to attack them, and soon the British agents succeeded in attaching the various Indian tribes to their interests.

Detroit now became the headquarters for the Indians, and the depot for the distribution of the great stores of goods that were annually sent up for them. The goods for distribution among the Indians were furnished by the British government, and consisted of clothing, cheap blankets with bright colors, fancy knives, scarlet cloth, ruffled shirts, laced



hats and other similar articles. The demands of the Indians for these goods became so great, that the governor was frightened at the expense, and was constantly making excuses to his government to show the necessity for his seeming extravagance. Whenever the Indians came to the council the squaws would strip them of their clothing in order that they might appear destitute, and thus be able to make demands for new clothing. The drafts drawn by the commandant in one year for these supplies were as follows:

September, 1780.....	£ 42,714	7s. 11d.
January, 1781.....	44,962	6s. 11½d.
September, 1781.....	55,225	13s. 6¼d.
Making a total of.....	£142,902	8s. 4¾d.

In addition to this great amount, there were other and probably larger quantities of goods sent to the merchants, and by them sold to the citizens and Indians. The government gave to the Indians as little rum as possible, but the traders were willing to sell them all they could buy. Rum was a necessity to the Indians, and they would get it in some way.

About the time the war began, the traders in the village formed what might be termed a "rum trust." They agreed to place all their rum in one store, and employ one or more clerks to see that it was properly disposed of and the avails divided pro rata among the members of the trust. If any other person brought rum into the district to undersell them, they shipped liquor to the place where the rival was established and undersold the intruder until he was willing to quit or to join them.

This worked only for a short time, and then dissatisfaction broke out, and the "trust" was dissolved.

There was some attempt to conform to legal methods in the punishment of crimes during the early administration of governor Hamilton. There were two justices of the peace appointed in Detroit, Philippe Dejean and Gabriel Legrand.

The exact powers of the justice were not laid down in any work on criminal procedure at that time, but Dejean did not propose to underestimate his authority. In 1777, a storehouse belonging to Abbott and Finchley was plundered and set fire to, and a Frenchman named Jean Coutencinau and a negress named Ann Wiley, or Nancy Wiley, were arrested and bought before Dejean for trial. They were accorded a jury trial and were acquitted on the charge of arson but convicted of robbery. It is very probable that the justice exceeded his powers even in trying the parties for the offenses charged, but he was not contented with trying them, and after the conviction, they were both sentenced to be hung. The high handed methods adopted by the justice surprised the people, and he could get no one to act as hangman until Hamilton promised the woman he would pardon her if she would act as executioner on the man. The result was that Coutencinau was hanged, and the woman was liberated.

In this matter, the justice had the support of governor Henry Hamilton, but this act and the hanging of a man named Ellers, in 1775, so aroused the citizens, that they complained to the authorities in Montreal. A grand jury was called there and both Hamilton and Dejean were indicted for murder and a warrant was issued for their arrest.

It seems strange and unaccountable sometimes, to have affairs of great moment and importance turn upon apparently insignificant events. Hamilton was so frightened at the knowledge that a warrant for his arrest was issued, that he gathered together all the troops he could at Detroit—stripped the country of all the provisions he could carry, and started for Vincennes, Indiana. Just before he reached that place, General George Rogers Clark had passed through Vincennes on his way to Kaskaskia. Clark had left the post in charge of Captain Helm, and one soldier. When Hamilton reached Vincennes, he demanded the surrender from Helm and after some negotiations, the place was given up to him. Clark

heard of Hamilton's visit, and returned at once and captured Hamilton and his entire army, and the next day he took Dejean a prisoner also.

Those who have read "Alice of Old Vincennes" are familiar with the story of this capture, which Mr. Maurice Thompson has woven into his romance. The surprising part of the transaction is that on this event, in part at least, hung the fate of the entire northwest territory. In the making of the final treaty at the close of the Revolutionary War, our government claimed this territory partly by right of conquest in the capture of Henry Hamilton and Phillippe Dejean.

So the lives of Eller and Coutencinau were sacrificed that the great Northwest, composing Ohio, Indiana, Illinois, Wisconsin and Michigan might become a part of the New United States, and to subsequently form five members of the great sisterhood of states.

I have said that the French people at Detroit never were cordial to the English, although they took no active part against them. When the news of Clark's victory reached the village, the Canadians (as the French were generally called) celebrated the event by a big bonfire, notwithstanding the presence of the British soldiery under Major Arent Schuyler DePeyster.

DePeyster was an officer in the army and was the military commandant at Detroit after Hamilton left. Hamilton had been a civil officer only. DePeyster, in many ways, undertook to mollify the French and at the same time to keep on good terms with the English and Indians. He was American born, a descendant of the Dutch families of New York. Somewhat light-hearted and jovial in his disposition, he entered into the pleasantries and amusements of the English and native Canadians on all occasions. He was something of a poet also, and he is best known by the fact that the last poem of the Scotch bard, Robert Burns, was addressed to him.

A book of his writings, mostly poems, printed in Dumfries, Scotland, in 1813, is on one of the shelves in my library.

One of the pastimes most commonly indulged in at this time, and in all subsequent times till the present, was racing on the ice in winter and ending the down river trip with a feast at the river Rouge (Red River). No one would justly accuse Major DePeyster of being a poet, though he thought himself one, but for the sake of the old time, I will include a song written by him called the Red River, "descriptive of the diversion of Carioling, or straying upon the ice at the post of Detroit in North America."

In winter, when rivers and lakes do cease flowing,  
 The Limnades (Lake Nymphs) to warm shelter all fled;  
 When ships are unrigged, and their boats do cease rowing,  
 'Tis then we drive up and down sweet River Red.  
 Freeze River Red, sweet serpentine river,  
 Where swift carioling is dear to me ever;  
 While frost-bound, the *Dunmore*, the *Gage*, and *Endeavor*,  
 Your ice bears me on to a *croupe en grillade*,

Our bodies wrapped up in a robe lined with sable,  
 A mask o'er the face, and fur cap on the head,  
 We drive out to dinner—where there is no table,  
 No chairs we can sit on, or stools in their stead.  
 Freeze River Red, sweet serpentine river,  
 Where sweet carioling is dear to me ever;  
 To woods, where on bear skins, we sit down so clever,  
 While served with the *Marquis*\* with *croupe en grillade*.

"*Une Verre de Madeir*," with his aspect so pleasing,  
 He serves to each lady, (who takes it in turn),  
 And says, "*Chere Madame, dis will keep you from freezing,*  
*Was warm you within where the fire it would burn.*"  
 Freeze River Red, sweet serpentine river,  
 For your carioling is dear to me ever;  
 Where served by the *Marquis* so polite and clever,  
 With smiles, and Madeir, and a *croupe en grillade*.

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\*Guillaume Lamotte, the Marquis, was a captain in the Indian Department during the Revolutionary War. He was a prominent and enthusiastic leader of the Indians in their Ohio incursions. He remained in Detroit many years, and became an American citizen.

Gov. Woodbridge speaks of him as late as 1815, performing the same duties for pleasure parties on the Rouge, as does DePeyster in 1784.

The gobblet goes round, while sweet echo's repeating  
The words which have passed through each fair lady's lips;  
Wild deer (with projected long ears) leave off eating,  
And bears sit attentive, erect on their hips.  
Freeze River Red, sweet serpentine river,  
Your fine wooded banks shall be dear to me ever,  
Where echo repeats Madame's *Chancon* so clever,  
Distinctly you hear it say—*croupe en grillade*.

The fort gun proclaims when 'tis time for returning,  
Our pacers all eager at home to be fed;  
We leave all the fragments, and wood clove for burning,  
For those who may next drive up sweet River Red.  
Freeze River Red, sweet serpentine river,  
On you, carioling, be dear to me ever,  
Where wit and good humor were ne'er known to sever,  
While drinking a glass to a *croupe en grillade*.

It will not be necessary, or perhaps best, to attempt to give any more of the "poem." The Dunmore, Gage and Endeavour were three small vessels, the largest on the lakes then that were wintered in the river Rouge.

The sleighing party, clad in furs and with faces covered with masks to protect them from the flying snowballs from the horses feet, raced up and down the river until tired and hungry. They then partook of refreshments served in the open air by a Frenchman named Guillaume LaMotte, a "character" from the fort. The dinner consisted largely of wild turkey, bear and venison meats. The Major would make us believe that the wild deer and bears came from the woods, and watched them at their repast. They did not cease their racing until the fort gun proclaimed it was time for returning.

Before we leave the times and events of the Revolutionary War, a portion of a letter written by Mr. John Askin, at Mackinac, to Jehu Hay, who was in the Indian department, and who subsequently succeeded Henry Hamilton as Lieutenant Governor at Detroit might be of interest. In explanation of the letter, it will be recalled that only one event of great

importance took place near Albany in the winter of 1777 and 1778, and that was the surrender of the British General Bourgoyne with some six thousand troops, to the American General Gates, in October 1777. Mr. Askin at Mackinac, received the news before it could reach Detroit, as it came to him over the Northern or Ottawa route, while the earliest comers to Detroit waited until the lake and river were free from ice. Of course we know that the news Mr. Askin furnished was entirely false; following, in that respect, much of the newspaper news we get today, but such news as he had was probably interesting to the British soldiers, to whom he furnished it. The letter is dated June 4, 1778, and reads as follows: "The two vessels, the first canoes from Detroit, and the Ottawa Indians going to war, all arrived yesterday; the latter are now dancing at my door. My things coming on shore in the greatest confusion and the Angelica preparing to sail; all this shall not deprive me of the pleasure of writing you a few lines in answer to your obliging letters. The news is that General Clinton's army defeated General Gates below Albany, and killed him with 7000 of his people, which prevented any attempt against Canada last winter."

The news given by this letter was far more interesting and exciting than true. It would make a good "scare head" for a modern newspaper.

Major DePeyster remained in Detroit some time after the preliminary Treaty of Peace between England and America of 1782. He was military commandant, and also had charge of the civil affairs of the village. The people were so unaccustomed to cleanliness in village affairs, that they were in the habit of dumping their garbage and filth in the river in front of the post. It seems almost incomprehensible that they should not have carried this refuse even a short distance below the fortification, but they did not, and the danger of disease springing from this filthiness, induced the major to offer the river front, which was public property, to the citizens, upon

condition that they would fill in the shallow spaces with earth, so that whatever was dumped in the river would pass down with the current.

At the close of the war, England agreed to surrender Detroit and the other frontier posts to the United States, but she refused to carry out the agreement, and it was not until thirteen years after the war closed—not until 1796—that Detroit was in the actual possession of our government. During this period the laws of Canada governed the village. Courts were established and at least one election to parliament was held here. The first and only Canadian judge appointed by the Canadian government for Detroit was William Dummer Powell, and although he continued to be a Canadian justice during his life, and filled that position with great honor, he was an American, having been born in Boston before the revolution. There were three members of parliament from Detroit, D. W. Smith, who lived at Niagara, but was elected in Detroit and who was subsequently surveyor general of Canada; Alexander Grant, who was commonly called the Commodore of the lakes, from his having charge of the British armed vessels on the upper lakes, and who lived at Grosse Pointe; and William Macomb, the ancestor of one branch of the Macomb family in Detroit, and the uncle of General Alexander Macomb.

The village authorities consisted of the Justices of the Peace, appointed by the governor of Upper Canada. They could make some rules for the government of the village, and doubtless had power to enforce them. Among the official documents of this period is a long list of people in the village who violated the rules laid down for their governance; a few read as follows:

Mr. William Scott complained of for allowing two cows to run at large in the streets; Mr. Girardin, Mr. Dolson and several others committed the same offense; George McDougal left his cart in the street at night. Mr. Fraro's apprentice boy

galloped his horse through the street. Hogs were daily found at large in the streets and their owners complained of. Mr. Baby had provided no ladders either for his own house, or for another which he owned and leased. Ladders were necessary in order to reach the roofs of the houses in case of fire, though you will recall that only a few years later neither ladders, nor buckets, nor the work of willing hands could save even a single house in the village, when, in 1805, every house, save one, was destroyed in open day.

Citizens were repeatedly complained of for having chimneys in a dangerous state, and no person, however high in authority, was exempt from inspection and complaint. William Macomb, member of parliament, and a wealthy trader, Lieutenant Hill, an officer in the Regulars, the Reverend J. Fitchet, probably a Chaplain, and the fife major of garrison, were all in the list of delinquents.

The entire village was located between Griswold street on the east, Wayne street on the west, the high bank of the river a little below Jefferson avenue, on the south, and Larned street on the north. From Larned street to a short distance above Congress street, was a low marshy tract of land through which ran a little creek. At the wet season of the year, this creek was so large that, even as late as 1830, there was a bridge over it where it crossed Woodward avenue, but in dry seasons it contained very little water. Even within the recollection of many persons now living, the lands now occupied by Grand Circus Park, and extending easterly, and southerly through Miami avenue and down to Congress street, were too wet to be cultivated. Some of the lands on Madison avenue were given by our city government to the Catholic Church for a burial ground in 1817, but as late as 1834, the church reported to the Common Council that the lots were low, covered with water a large portion of the year, and wholly unfitted for cemetery purposes. The city then permitted the church to sell the lots, and purchase some higher and dryer land for its use.



## IN 1775





## Detroit Under American Rule.

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WHEN the Americans came in 1796, there was a great rejoicing among nearly all the people, but a few, who did not want to become citizens, either refused to take the oath of allegiance, or moved across the river to Sandwich. The Americans brought with them new courts and a great influx of new citizens. The laws were not greatly changed, for Detroit had been under English laws for many years. The trial by jury always prevailed under the British and the greater part of our own laws originated in Great Britain.

General Wayne was the officer in command of the first soldiers who came here, and Winthrop Sargent, who came with him, was the acting governor of the Northwest Territory. Sargent at once proclaimed the boundaries of a new country, and named it Wayne, in honor of the General. What a county Wayne was! It commenced at the Cuyahoga river, the middle of the present city of Cleveland, and extended westward to the Mississippi river, including the northern parts of Ohio, Indiana and Illinois, and all of Michigan, Wisconsin and part of Minnesota. Detroit was the county seat of the great County, and it grew rapidly in population from this time. In 1802, Ohio became a state, and Detroit was incorporated as a village of the territory of Indiana. In 1805, Michigan became a territory, and its first officers were William Hull, governor, Augustus Brevoort Woodward, Frederick Bates and John Griffin, judges.

Bates lived in Detroit before his appointment, but Hull did not reach the place until June 12, 1805, and he found

what had been the village, only a mass of ashes and smoldering embers. It had been destroyed by fire the day before. As many of the people as could be accommodated, were taken into the fort, which occupied the site of present postoffice, and the others camped on the commons in such places as they could find. The garrison furnished some tents, and some slept in the open air. In all history I do not recall another instance of the complete destruction of a village such as Detroit suffered at this time.

Everything was in the utmost confusion, and remained so for a long time. There were no great mills to turn out lumber for new houses, but the people set to work, almost in desperation, and prepared habitations for the coming winter.

One great good that resulted from the fire was the laying out of a new plan for the village on a larger scale. During the winter of 1805-6 Congress passed laws authorizing the platting of the new village and distribution of lots to those who lived in the settlement before the fire. The resurrection of the village was rapid, but the site changed somewhat, and stores were built on Woodward avenue below Jefferson avenue, and on the side streets. An attempt was made to divert the center of trade to the corner of Randolph and Atwater street, but the attempt only demonstrated that it is not within the power of man to control the movement of the center of trade of a city. No new picket line was established around the new village until a little before the commencement of the war of 1812. The people then became frightened at the threats of an Indian uprising, and a new picket line was built, extended from the governor's house, where the Biddle house now stands, northerly along Randolph to Cadillac Square, and thence along that street and Michigan avenue to the old picket line at Wayne street, and thence to the river. Just outside this picket line on the east, was the farm of Elijah Brush. Mr. Brush was an attorney who had come to the village shortly after the American occupancy, and who

became prominent in village affairs, and a man of influence and wealth. He married Adelaide, the daughter of John Askin, who then resided on the Canadian side of the river. Mr. Askin was deeply involved in debt, and his son-in-law took from him the present Brush farm and agreed to pay the purchase price to Askin's Montreal creditors. It was with much privation and hard work that he was enabled to carry out his contract, but he worked with indomitable will and finally left the farm as a rich legacy to the support of his descendants to the fourth generation, who are now living from its income, and it bids fair to last at least another generation.

The War of the Revolution did not end with the treaty of peace in 1783, nor with the Battle of Fallen Timbers, in 1794, nor with the surrender of the frontier posts in 1796. It ended only with the treaty of peace that followed the war of 1812. It may be that the United States was not entirely justified in declaring war in June of that year, but it is very probable that war would have soon come, no matter what we desired, for the feeling always existed in military circles of Great Britain, that the rebel colonies were only waiting for a chance to reattach themselves to the mother country, and it took another war to disabuse them of this idea. The war of 1812 found us totally unprepared for a conflict. The man who was in charge of the western army, Governor William Hull, was entirely unfitted to hold such a position. He was a brave soldier and officer in the Revolution, and it is probable that no one could ever question his personal bravery, but he was not the proper person to be placed in charge of a large detachment of troops with no superior officer on whom he could rely for directions.

Coming to Detroit with his army just at the time war was declared, he crossed the river, invaded Canada and took up a position at Sandwich. The Canadian force then at Fort Malden, or Amherstburg, was inferior to his own, and he could, without doubt, have captured the place, and could, pos-

sibly, have annexed all of Canada to the United States. With his waiting, he permitted the augmentation of the Canadian force, until it was nearly as large as his own, and he feared to proceed against it. He remained a month in Canada, with his army, and then retreated to Detroit. At this time the forces in Amherstburg were under Col. Henry Procter. The acting governor of Upper Canada was General Isaac Brock, who was then detained with the Canadian Parliament at York (now Toronto). Dissolving the session of parliament, Brock proceeded at once to Amherstburg with additional reinforcements. With a daring and bravery that should be commended alike by friend and foe—for bravery is honored wherever it is found—he hastily followed in the retreating footsteps of Governor Hull, and within a very few days—less than a week—after his arrival at Fort Malden, he had passed up the Canadian side of the river to Sandwich, where he planted his battery; crossed the river at Springwells, landing at the grounds where now is established the Solvay Process and marching up the river accepted from Governor Hull, the surrender of the entire northwest portion of the United States almost without firing a gun.

On the old flag staff in the fort, which stood on the south side of Fort street a short distance west of Shelby street, there was run up the white flag of surrender, a little before noon on the sixteenth of August, 1812. It is said that no American flag was ever after floated from this pole. It fell a few years later, and the stump of it is now preserved in the Museum of Art.

The militia of Detroit under the command of Major James Witherell and Major Elijah Brush, were paroled, as were also the Ohio Militia, but the regulars, with General Hull, were sent as prisoners to Montreal, and were subsequently exchanged. Hull, himself, in deep disgrace, was permitted to return to his old home in Massachusetts, where he was confronted with charges of cowardice and treason. He was tried

by court martial in Albany, in 1814, and was found guilty of cowardice and sentenced to be shot. The President remitted the death penalty, but dismissed him from the army in disgrace.

Almost a hundred years have passed and during that time constant efforts have been made by Hull and his descendants to prove to the world that he was innocent of the grave charges laid at his door. It will be remembered that Hull's grandson, General Joseph Wheeler, was in Detroit two years since inspecting the grounds occupied by the two armies, for the purpose of proving that Hull was justified in surrendering as he did.

Lewis Cass, soon after, received the appointment of Governor of Michigan, although, as he said, Detroit was a frontier post that was scarcely worth retention by our government.

During the war, every person who could well leave Detroit, did so, and its population was diminished by half before the year of the British occupation was ended. Procter remained as military and civil governor under the British. Judge Woodward also remained for a time, but he refused to act in any other capacity than a civilian to look after the welfare of the Americans, and he left to prefer charges of cruelty and incivility against Procter.

The Battle of Lake Erie was won by Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry on September 10, 1813, and on hearing of the result Procter evacuated Detroit, and hastened to the interior of Canada. He was rapidly followed by General William Henry Harrison, overtaken on the River Thames, brought to battle, severely beaten, and a large portion of his army captured.

Cass came to Detroit as governor shortly after this, and at the same time the old citizens began to return to their homes.

Brush had died, but Witherell, Woodward, Griffin, Solo-

mon Sibley, and many others returned and many new names appear in the list of citizens.

Reuben Attwater had been the secretary before the war, but had left when the war broke out. Cass persuaded the President to appoint William Woodbridge to this office, and when Attwater found this out, he called on the President and asked why he had been removed. He told the President he was always ready and willing to return to Detroit, but that he had never been asked to do so. The President told him that it should not have been necessary to ask him to return to Detroit as he had never been directed to leave the place.

The salary attached to the office of Secretary was not sufficient to suit Woodbridge, and he retained the appointment as secretary—neither accepting nor rejecting it, for some time. He wrote to Cass and to many of his political friends that he could not accept the office with the inadequate salary. He wanted the allowance increased in some way, and finally he succeeded in getting the double appointment of secretary and collector of customs and subsequently, for several years, drew salaries for both offices, and at one time, for one year, held a third important office of delegate to Congress. After he had received the appointment of secretary and collector, he wrote that he would visit Detroit and look over the ground and if the situation was satisfactory, he would accept the offices. Starting from his Marietta home in December, 1814, and proceeding by slow conveyance over the frozen marshes and through the almost trackless forests, he did not reach Detroit until the middle of January, 1815, and by this time, peace had been declared between the two countries, though the news of this event had not then reached the settlement. Woodbridge was pleased with his new home, and wrote entertainingly of the prospects ahead of him here. He at once entered into the gaieties of the Military post—his offices giving him an entrance into the most refined and polite society of the place. As entertaining a description of the life of the post as can any-



where he found, is contained in one of the long home letters that Governor Woodbridge wrote at this time. The first part of the letter is dated February 17, 1815, though it appears that Mr. Woodbridge was several days in writing it. It reads as follows:

"I received, a few days ago, a letter from Mr. H. Brush, enclosing one for his late cousin's widow, Mrs. Adelaide Brush, of this place. I had heard much of this lady's steadiness of deportment and general good sense. She is, by birth, an English subject, and an inhabitant of Canada. Her father now has of children and grandchildren in the British service, seventeen. Her connections and other circumstances have given rise to imputations against the good faith of her late husband: Whether they be well founded, I do not know. I called upon her soon after coming here. She lives in an old one story house just without the town, pleasantly enough situated, near the banks of the Detroit river. The farm is one of the best in the country, and has on it some of the best fruit. All the farms in this country are strangely laid out, having in general the width of from two to six square acres in front, and running two or three miles back. Mrs. Brush lives snugly and her house looks neat. She has some of the handsomest little children I have ever seen. She is simple and unostentatious in her manners, and very cordially pressed me to return. I have since called upon her, took a ride of some eight or ten miles in her cariole with her, on the ice, and returned to tea. She gave me a good cup of tea, and I was pleased with her conversation. She seems to possess a substantially good mind. She is perhaps 28 or 30 years old. On the day of my ride with her, there was a "beefsteak" party to the river Rouge, about six or seven miles from here. It was composed of from fifteen to twenty gentlemen, officers and citizens. I did not of course, partake of it. Some of the Kentucky officers getting tipsy, an affray took place toward the conclusion of the party, and some black eyes were the consequence.

Yesterday another "beefsteak" party to the river Rouge was made up, composed of ladies and gentlemen, from fifteen to thirty, perhaps. We set out about twelve o'clock, each gentleman taking his lass, his bottle, his gook, his pye, his uncooked meat, his plates, etc. for himself and partner in his cariole. When I arrived (being with Judge May) they were dancing. We had two good fiddlers and enough American ladies to make up a dance. Being Lent, the few French ladies present only looked on. The gentlemen fell to assisting the servants, set the table and prepared a very good dinner. About three, the party sat down to dinner, and before dark we had returned home. In this party there was no gambling, which is seldom the case here. The inhabitants most generally play cards in all their parties, and the officers gamble a great deal. Formerly, I am told, the citizens of the place most usually had their River Rouge or other parties of this sort once a week during the winter, or at least as long as the sleighing lasts. At this party I again saw Mrs. Hunt. She is perhaps 28 years old, she is still quite handsome, has rosy cheeks, and dances with great animation. Mr. Hunt, her husband, is but little older than she—they are, perhaps as well the happiest, as they certainly are the handsomest couple in Detroit. They have been married several years, but have no children. She too, was originally a British subject. Mr. Hunt is a wealthy merchant of Detroit. He keeps a cariole worth a hundred dollars, perhaps, a plated harness and valuable horses. Mrs. Hunt, I think, improves on acquaintance.

I feel anxious to hear how you have borne up against the terribly cold weather, which, I am told, extended through Ohio, as well as this country, three or four weeks ago. Colder it has been here, I am told, than has been known for sixteen or twenty years. Our prospects of quietness continue here. There is scarcely a possibility of an hostile attack here this winter, and but very little chance of any hostile disturbance in the spring or summer. Much, however, will depend on the

military operations of next spring at the upper end of Lake Ontario.

With respect to our ultimate establishment here, I have thought much, but can come to no decided opinion. For pleasantness you will rarely have seen a country equal to this, but I am afraid this cold climate will not agree with you. Consumptions are not very prevalent, and very rarely occur, I am told. Another objection, and an important one, is the very high price of property here. I cannot buy any comfortable house here for less than about \$5,000. What can we do? Our ultimate determination must be suspended I think, until my return here next fall. I think Mr. Palmer may get a very good farm, down on the river Rouge, within from five to eight miles from here, and that distance in this level country is nothing.

Having written to you so recently and so frequently, by private opportunities, as well as by the mail, I think I shall retain this letter until next week. After that I may tell you more about our ball of the 22d. ins't. It is with much pain that I mingle with these people so much, but I feel myself obliged to do it. Did I not do it, it would be ungrateful in me, and by them would be considered unaccountable austerity, but I shall have this to console me, that after I become acquainted, and my debut made, we together, can hereafter choose our own course, and then it will not be deemed ostentatious singularity. In the meantime, I do not consider myself at home. It is all fatigue duty with me. Mr. May's house here, is most pleasantly situated. It commands an unobstructed and most beautiful view of the river. It has annexed to it perhaps two-thirds of an acre of ground and a barn. It is a one story gable roof house, having four rooms on the first floor, beside a hall or front entry running through the house and opening on a piazza. It has, I am told, some good chambers up stairs, and on each end a brick building perhaps 20 feet or more square, one used as a kitchen, the other as

an office, and this building can, I suppose, be procured for less than \$5,000, which here is considered cheap. The house is of stone and is finished with plain neatness.

February 25th.

The face of things is quite changed—instead of glowing anticipations of ruined cornfields, burning houses, of scalped women and children, and all the horrors of war and desolation, we have the cheering news of peace, plenty and prosperity. This cheering intelligence reached here from Washington city in the most wonderful period of five days. A letter from the Postmaster General dated on the fourteenth (the day of the arrival of the treaty) reached me about nine A. M. of the 20th. Except with the military gentleman, the news was received with joyous acclamations—and most unfortunately too, it was followed by an immediate rise in real property. However, I will hope for the best. I received immediately after, the congratulations of Col. McDougal on the consequent certainty of making a large sum of money in the ensuing year in my collector's office. If there should be much bustle in the collector's office, it may detain me here a week or two later than I intended.

I was at the ball of the 22d. There were forty-nine ladies although it was Lent. Some went from the British side—although there were forty-nine ladies, yet there were so many gentlemen, that it was a perfect scramble for partners. The ladies in general, looked better than at the former ball. Mr. May and myself stayed until one half past four o'clock, and heard the morning gun before we left."

In this interesting letter, so descriptive of early times, Governor Woodbridge refers to Mr. and Mrs. Hunt. Mrs. Hunt was Ann MacIntosh, daughter of Angus MacIntosh, a Scotchman, prominently connected with the Northwest Fur Company. He inherited the estate of Moy in Scotland and returned there to live. He is sometimes referred to as the Earl

of Moy. Her husband, Henry Jackson Hunt, well and favorably known, was the second elected Mayor of Detroit and died during his term of office in 1826. The James May house that the writer refers to was the Mansion House on Jefferson avenue below Wayne Street. It was partly of stone, taken from the stone chimneys left after the fire of 1805.

The place rapidly recovered from the effects of the war. The new people who came to make their homes here were largely from New England and New York. They seemed to be filled with an energy to make compensation for the losses entailed by the war. The farms had been stripped of everything, and the farmers and citizens were exceedingly poor, but a greater wealth was coming every day. Within two years after the close of the war, a newspaper was established and then came the first steamboat—the *Walk in the Water*. A change in the form of government allowed the territory to be represented by a delegate to Congress, and William Woodbridge was the first person elected to fill that office. The University of Michigan was established, a Sunday school was opened for the instruction of poor children free of charge, and it was even proposed to open free public schools.

In the battle of Lake Erie Commodore Oliver Hazard Perry, on board the *Lawrence*, had as second in command, Lieutenant John Brooks. Brooks was described as a gay, dashing officer of extraordinary personal beauty. As the battle opened the entire effort of the British was to destroy the *Lawrence*, the flag ship, and it was but a short time before the deck was strewn with dead and dying sailors. As Brooks was speaking to the Commodore a cannon ball struck him and he was hurled to the opposite side of the boat, mangled in a most frightful manner. He implored Perry to kill him to relieve him from his misery, but death came to him only a short time later, and his body, with that of others, remained upon the deck. Every gun on the *Lawrence*, except one,

was dismounted when Perry was forced to leave the vessel as it was unmanageable. Out of one hundred men who were on the boat when the battle began, only eighteen were left unwounded. Perry at once left for the Niagara in which he continued the battle and won out completely before the day was over.

The *Lawrence* drifted until the battle was over and then Perry again visited her, and many of the dead sailors were committed to the deep, but the remains of Lieutenant Brooks were taken to Put-in-Bay and there buried on one of the islands.

It is said that John Brooks was born in Massachusetts and studied medicine with his father. He was a lieutenant in the marines and was stationed in Washington when the war broke out. He recruited marines for Perry's navy during the time the boats were building.

A movement was started in 1817 to bring Brooks' body to Detroit and give it a public burial. This was done on October 30th and 31st, 1817. The funeral procession formed in the cantonment and marched through the principal streets of the city and the burial took place on the glacis of Fort Shelby within the Military Reserve, now, for the first time, appropriated for that purpose. The exact place of burial cannot now be determined, but it was near the intersection of Fort and Griswold streets.

Reverend Sylvester Larned, the "Silver Tongued Orator," a brother of General Charles Larned, performed the burial services.

Captain Henry Whiting, then of the Fifth Infantry, wrote the following poem for the occasion :

Too long on lonely isle neglected,  
Marked by no stone, thy dust has slept,  
By humble turf alone protected,  
O'er which rude Time each year has swept.

Ere many summers there has revelled,  
Decking thy grave with wild flowers fair,  
The tumid earth, depressed and levelled,  
Had left no index vestige there.

Still had the wave, around that dashes—  
Scene of thy fate—the story told,  
And 'gainst the isle that held thy ashes,  
In seeming fondness ceaseless roll'd.

But now with kindred heroes lying,  
Thou shalt repose on martial ground,  
Thy country's banners o'er thee flying  
Her castles and her camps around.

And friendship there shall leave its token,  
And beauty there in tears may melt,  
For still the charm may rest unbroken,  
So many tender hearts have felt.

Then rest, lamented youth, in honor,  
Erie shall still preserve thy name;  
For those who fell 'neath Perry's banner,  
Must still survive in Perry's fame.

In 1819 a bank was organized and the next year a Protestant church was dedicated, though the Catholics had had church edifices in the village for the previous 118 years.

The exportations from Detroit had previously consisted of furs and maple sugar, but to these was now added the exportation of whitefish, and a great industry soon sprang up in this line.

The city was incorporated in 1815, and owned all of the lands within its limits, and ten thousand acres of adjacent territory. These lands were sold and a court house or capitol was erected from the proceeds. This building was subsequently occupied by the Capitol Union School and burned a few years since.

It would be impossible to tell who were the foremost merchants in the place, but the names of a few might be given. There were Mack & Conant, composed of Stephen Mack and Shubael Conant, John L. Whiting, DeGarmo Jones, Abraham Edwards; T. and F. Palmer, composed of Thomas Palmer, the father of Senator T. W. Palmer, and his brother, Friend Palmer; Henry Jackson Hunt and John R. Williams, Detroit's first elected Mayor; Thomas Emerson, an eccentric Vermonter, came here at a very early day and formed a partnership with Stephen Mack. The partnership existed until August, 1817, when Emerson returned to Vermont, and a new partnership was formed by Mack and Conant, which lasted many years. Emerson had faith in Detroit, and loaned money to Detroit merchants, and subsequently his son, Curtis, came to the state to reside.

President James Monroe visited Detroit in 1817, and his stay here was a round of merriment for the entire community. Everyone was welcomed by the president, and all tried to do him honors for the five days of his visit. A ride on the river and lake—a ball every evening in his honor—and the illumination of the city at night by bonfires and candles in all the windows of the stores and dwellings; these were only a part of the honors shown to him. He was received with a public address of welcome, and made a public response. The Military department took advantage of his presence to have him present to General Alexander Macomb a sword that had been voted to him by the State of New York, and a Military



review of the soldiers of the garrison was held on the esplanade.

In 1823 by another change in the laws of the territory, the judiciary and legislative bodies were separated, and Judges Woodward and Griffin, who had held their positions since 1805, were legislated out of office.

For some years prior to 1823, the newspaper of Detroit had been published by Sheldon and Reed. The paper had begun to publish articles reflecting on these two judges, and as the judges paid no attention to the remarks, and as the people seemed to like them, the paper continued to publish them, increasing the bitterness as each new article appeared. It is probable that no other paper ever continued to print such scandalous articles reflecting on the judiciary as appeared in the Detroit Gazette. Not only did the editors devote themselves to the writing of these articles, but they published the letters of correspondents, as bitter as their editorials. The Judges were called thieves, gamblers, blacklegs, bribetakers, and all other names that could be invented. Their private characters were assailed and they were driven almost to distraction. They were ridiculed and abused. They were not allowed the use of the columns of the paper to insert a reply, and their letters in defense were either returned to them unpublished, or thrown in the fire. Most of the articles referred only to Judge Woodward, as he was the leading spirit in the court, and Griffin was looked upon as his tool.

One of the letters to Judge Woodward ends like this: "The portals of your narrow, selfish soul are as firmly barred against every generous or noble sentiment as the dark cave of Cerberus. You are literally without a friend. So disgusting is your character in every point of view, that it is really a matter of curious speculation how or by what strange fatality such a man should have been palmed off upon this territory."

On another and later occasion, a correspondent puts this question to the editor: "A very singular question has arisen under the law of this territory exempting property taken on execution. This law exempts the tools necessary for the trade or profession of the party. Suppose now, that an execution was issued against the goods and chattels of his honor, Judge Woodward, would, or would not his other honor, Judge Griffin, be exempt from seizure under this execution?"

After due deliberation and seeking legal advice on the subject, the editor replied: "A learned counsellor has given it as his professional opinion on this subject, that Judge Griffin must be taken, because the law will not exempt tools used for the purposes of fraud."

We must remember that these caustic articles were not written concerning men in the ordinary walks of life, but that the victims of this tirade were the judges of the Supreme Court of the territory, the highest court of Michigan.

Among the lawyers of this period were Solomon Sibley, Alexander D. Frazer, Charles Larned, James Duane Doty, William Woodbridge and George McDougall. In 1822 Samuel B. Beach and James L. Cole and his brother Harry S. Cole, were admitted to practice law. The Cole brothers came from Canandaigua, N. Y. Detroit was considered as a great health resort at this time, and James, who was ill with an incurable disease, came hoping to recover his health, but he could not, and returned to his New York home to die, Feb. 8, 1828. He was only 24 years of age at the time of his death, but the brilliant mind which he possessed left its deep impression on the community, and particularly on the bar of Detroit. He was something of a poet, and numerous verses written by him appeared in the Detroit paper at the time. One of his poems which originally appeared in New York Statesman, and was written by this young man when

he knew that his life could be prolonged but a few days, is particularly pathetic:

"The skylark carols on the wing,  
Her path is high in air;  
Yet she can safely mount and sing,  
With none to harm her there.

While one who hath immortal powers,  
Who breathes a nobler lay,  
Must perish, ere his morning hours,  
Have brightened into day."

The brother, Harry Cole, as he was commonly called, was the wit of the Detroit bar. Brilliant, engaging, fascinating in conversation, beloved of all his friends and acquaintances, he soon stood with the best in his profession. He also was called away too soon, but he left a deep impression and a name that three-quarters of a century has not effaced.

The Detroit Herald was published from 1824 to 1829. Its editor and proprietor was Henry Chipman, father of the late J. Logan Chipman. Of course, the wordy war between the two newspapers was always sharp and bitter, for the editors of both were able men and their pens were usually dipped in wormwood and gall.

The Gazette was burned in 1830, and from its ashes sprang the Free Press in 1831. This paper was owned by Joseph Campau, and his nephew, Gen. John R. Williams, and was first printed from type brought to Detroit from Pontiac, and which had been used at that place to print the Oakland Chronicle. The first editor of the Free Press was Sheldon McKnight. There were two other papers in the city at that time, called the Detroit Journal and the Courier.

In 1831 Cass was appointed Secretary of War and the management of the territorial affair fell upon the shoulders of Stevens Thompson Mason, who was then only twenty years of age, as Acting Governor. There was a great stir

in the little city when it was understood that Mason would retain his position as acting Governor, notwithstanding his youth, and public meetings were held, the constituted authorities were denounced for the outrage, and petitions for Mason's removal were circulated and signed and forwarded to Washington. The work availed nothing—for not only did Mason retain his office of Acting Governor and Secretary of the Territory during the remainder of the time that Michigan was a territory, but he conducted the duties of his office so well, that he was the first elected governor when Michigan became a State.

In 1832 Detroit was visited by the terrible scourge of Asiatic cholera.

In May of that year, information was received at Detroit that there was great danger of an uprising of Indians in the West, under the leadership of Black Hawk, and the Michigan militia were called out, organized, drilled and dispatched overland to Chicago. Some of the soldiers turned back after marching a few days into the interior, but the most of them continued their journey until they arrived at the village of Chicago, and then ascertained that the Indians were still so far to the west of them that the greatest danger to the inhabitants of that place, came from the terror inspired by stories of travelers who had seen the Indians, but had not encountered them.

While the excitement was at its height, Gen. Winfield Scott was sent with two vessels loaded with regulars from Buffalo around the lake. When these vessels reached Detroit, one of the soldiers on board the "Henry Clay" died of cholera at Detroit. The news of the death spread through the city like wildfire. The boats were not permitted to land but were forced to continue their journey. Some of the soldiers got ashore in St. Clair river and deserted, many of the others died on the trip to Chicago.

The people of Detroit were so excited that business was

suspended, and houses were deserted. The neighboring villages, Pontiac, Mt. Clemens and Ypsilanti stationed watchmen in the public roads to prevent people from Detroit passing their way. Many people died in the city, among them Father Gabriel Richard, the priest of Ste. Anne's Church. It was not until fall that the excitement died out and the people returned to their usual vocations.

Two years later, the terrible scourge again visited the place. A census of the city was taken in July showing that there were 4,937 people in the place. The people were terribly frightened and left the city in all directions. The papers published very little regarding the disease, but some evidence of their troubles appeared from time to time. There were 279 deaths from cholera in August, nearly ten a day. Governor Porter, the recently appointed territorial governor, died on the ninth of July, and he was buried the same day. The papers spoke very highly of the man, and never referred to the fact that he died of cholera, but the haste with which they interred the remains indicated their knowledge that the grim reaper had again called with his Asiatic scythe. It was in the midst of all these troubles that the brilliant wit of Detroit bar—Harry S. Cole—upon calling at the post office received a letter, which, after reading to himself, he read aloud to the gathered crowd. In spite of the sombre cloud of fear occasioned by the presence of death, that hung over them all, they joined in peals of laughter as Cole proceeded with the reading. The letter was from the eccentric Vermont capitalist, Thomas Emerson, and was devoted to Thomas Palmer, who was then a wealthy, but land poor trader of Detroit. It read as follows:

WINDSOR, Vermont, August 1, 1834.

*Henry S. Cole, Esq., Attorney at Law.*

MY DEAR HAL:—I am rejoiced to say to you that the Lord hath been among us here in Windsor; that the day of Pentecost is here, and that there has been an outpouring of the Holy Ghost, and that I have been snatched as a brand from the burning. I am now “laying up all my treasures in Heaven, where neither moth nor rust doth corrupt, and where thieves do not break through and steal.” Oh, Hal! how I wish you and our old friend, Tom Palmer, might see the error of your ways. By the by, Mr. Palmer has not paid his interest on that bond for nearly two years; now I learn that “the pestilence is stalking at noon-day” among you, and we know not how soon you may go. You and he, too, ought to prepare for death, and he ought certainly to settle that bond at once. Oh Hal! if God would only open your eyes; and Mr. Palmer, surely he will pay the interest on that bond now. I pray nightly and daily for you and Mr. Palmer; and trust he will pay the interest on this bond.

That the Lord will guard and keep you, dear Hal, and my friend Palmer, is our constant prayer; but do make him pay the interest on the bond. I will take furs, shingles, lumber, apples, fish or anything he has. God bless and preserve you both, but please do not let Mr. Palmer forget to pay the interest on the bond.

Your devoted friend,

THOMAS EMERSON.

This is the story. For its truth we rely upon the word of George C. Bates, another old-time prominent lawyer and wit.

And now through its varying phases of light and shade, we have followed the story of our frontier city for a century and a third. The details of the history of such a period could not be written in a score of volumes, while at present that work is scattered through a hundred publications. Every year of that time contains a romance, interesting, and as yet undeveloped and almost unknown.

